



GOLDEN HORDE

GOLDEN HORDE, name given to the Mongol Khanate ruled by the descendants of Joči (Juji; d. 624/1226-27), the eldest son of Čengiz (Genghis) Khan (q.v.). Its core was the steppelands north of the Black Sea and the Caspian conquered in 1236-40 by an army under Joči's son Batu (Bātu), who ranks as its first khan and whose descendants reigned until about 1360; Batu's older brother Orda (Urda) reigned over the territories of the so-called White Horde to the north-east. Possession of the wealthy and cosmopolitan region of K̄vārazm brought the Golden Horde khans and their nomadic subjects, who were mainly Qepčaq̄s (Qepčāq), increasingly under Muslim cultural influences. Batu's brother and successor, Berke (Berkāy; 1257-1267), was a Muslim, as were all the khans from Özbek (1312-1341) onwards. The administrative center of the Khanate was Sarai (from Pers. *sarāy* "palace"), the city built by Batu on the lower Volga; another city, New Sarai (Sarā-ye jadid, sometimes misleadingly called Sarā-ye baraka), was founded by Özbek.

For purpose of this article, the most important aspect of the history of the Golden Horde is its wars from about 1261 onwards against the Il-khans. Jochid forces were encamped in northern Persia and in present-day Afghanistan prior to the great expedition of Hülegü (Hulāgu, q.v.), in which Jochid princes and their contingents also participated. When he established himself as ruler of Persia, Hülegü executed these princes and slaughtered their troops (Rašid-al-Din, Baku, III, pp. 77, 86-88). The survivors either took refuge in the Mamluk empire or fled east to join the Jochid general Negüder (Negudar), who was operating in present-day Afghanistan and the Indian borderlands, and



became known as the Negüderis (Neguderiān) or Qarā'unās (Aubin, 1969). Hülegü was thereby able to appropriate lands south of the Caucasus (Arrān, Azarbaijan, and Hamadān), which the Golden Horde claimed on the grounds of Čengiz Khan's division of territory among his sons (‘Omari, p. 15; *Tāriḳ-e Waṣṣāf*, pp. 50, 398). It has been suggested that these territories were more important to the Golden Horde than were the tributary Russian lands (Halperin, 1983).

Despite launching a series of invasions south of the Caucasus (1261-63, 1265, 1266-67, 1279-80, 1288, 1290, 1301, 1319, 1335-36), the khans of the Golden Horde failed to make any real headway against the Il-khans for almost a century. The main significance of the conflict was that it helped to tie down Ilkhanid troops in the region and contributed to the encirclement of Mongol Persia, as from 1262-63 the Golden Horde was allied with the Mamluk sultans of Egypt, who were of Qepčaq origin and therefore of the same stock as the khans' own subjects. The threat of joint action, never great, receded after the conclusion of peace between the Mamluks and Abu Sa'id (q.v.) in 1320-23. Taking advantage of the disintegration of the Ilkhanate after Abu Sa'id's death, the khan Janibeg (Jāni Bēg, 1342-1358) invaded and occupied Azarbaijan, putting to death its Chobanid (q.v.) ruler, Malek Ašraf (1357). But his son and successor Berdibeg (Berdi Bēg) withdrew to Sarai and was murdered in 1359. Batu's line shortly became extinct, and the Golden Horde slid into a lengthy civil war in which rival khans competed for the throne. In about 1378 the khan Toqtamiš (Toqtameš), aided by Timur (Temür, Tamerlane), united the Golden Horde and the White Horde. But in resentment at Timur's annexation of K̄vārazm he quarrelled with his benefactor and invaded Azarbaijan (1386). Timur's invasion of the Qepčaq steppe put an end to incursions by the Golden Horde into Persia, and in the 15th century the Golden Horde dissolved into a number of smaller states.

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